

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

By the foregoing amendment, claims 1 and 15 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Thus, claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

In the Office Action dated November 2, 2007, claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,788,683 to Ikeda ("Ikeda"). It is noted that claims 1 and 15 have been amended. To the extent that the rejection remains applicable to the claims currently pending, the Applicants hereby traverse the rejection as follows.

The Applicants submit that Ikeda does not disclose or suggest a method for transmitting data in an IP network according to a source and destination flow table, a flow key, and one or more variables comprising at least the combination of receiving a data transmission in an IP network; forming a combined, source/destination address entry based on an extracted field from a header of a data transmission; and determining a most granular bit-value mask corresponding to the combined, source/destination address entry from a mask table having a plurality of bit-value masks, wherein the plurality of bit-value masks include a plurality of granularities corresponding to each of the plurality of fields in the header, as recited in amended claim 1.

Fig. 3 of the present invention illustrates an embodiment of a combined, source/destination address in column 3010 of table 3000.

In contrast to the invention in claim 1, Ikeda is designed for use in processing for IP packets sent over ATM-based circuits or Frame Relay circuits. Claim 1 is directed to determining a most granular bit-value mask for transmitting data in IP networks. Ikeda is meant to overcome the limitation of content addressable memory (slow lookups for a large number of entries) that could be inherent in ATM and Frame Relay networks.

Although Ikeda does disclose the use of a flow table and masking keys for lookup, Ikeda does not form a combined, source/destination address entry, as recited in amended claim 1. Thus, Ikeda must maintain a separate forwarding table for every destination address, which in turn maps to a “node” index in the flow action table. The flow action table contains the actions for flows, but only the flows within the context of a specific node index, where the specific node index is a direct result of a separate Destination Address lookup in the forwarding table. Thus, Ikeda requires that every destination address lookup map to a specific node index without any masking in the flow action table.

Also, although Ikeda teaches a bitmask, Ikeda only teaches one retrieval bit mask per input VPI/VCI, so that only one bitmask can be applied to each field in the respective headers of the IP packet. In contrast, amended claim 1 recites determining a most granular bit-value mask corresponding to the combined, source/destination address entry from a mask table having a plurality of bit-value masks, wherein the plurality of bit-value masks include a plurality of granularities corresponding to each of the plurality of fields in the header.

For at least this combination of reasons, the Applicants submit that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over the cited art. For similar reasons, the Applicants submit that

claim 15 is likewise allowable. As claim 1 and 15 are allowable, the Applicants submit that claims 2-14 and 16-20, which depend from allowable claims 1 and 15, are likewise allowable.

CONCLUSION

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending patentability distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 with reference to Attorney Docket No. 026215-00006.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attorney Docket No. 026215-00006

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